

## Last of The Real Ones by lenaismad

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**Summary:**

In which Billy and Steve are roommates, Billy like Steve way too much, and Steve is not as perfect as he imagines him to be.

## Last of The Real Ones

### Author's Note:

Okay, okay, okay. Here you go. My writing has gotten really shit. The plot line is barely existent. It was supposed to be happy. It got angsty. But that's just my default setting it seems. I'm sorry for all of the above. (I'm going to edit it eventually but the sun is about to rise and it's a school night so, uh, sorry about grammar and spelling and stuff)

TW: Implications of self harm

Also, just a side note. This is a strange AU in which Steve and Billy are very much out of character. I just felt like writing it.

Lena signing off.

Perhaps it could have been perceived as a problem, obsession even, but Billy saw it as more of a... fascination. And then again – who wasn't fascinated by Steve Harrington? He was one of those strangely captivating types, the kind that made it hard to tear your eyes from, that made it hard to see anything beyond the horizons of his silhouette. With Steve in the room, it was hard to breathe.

If he was being perfectly honest, Billy preferred Steve to oxygen. And as much as he hated it, he was not the only one. Steve was like the sun – scorching, burning, but oh so desirable. Billy tried not to think too hard about the pool of jealousy bubbling in the pit of his stomach. It was easier to feint indifference.

Steve set a can of cheap off-brand beer (the only kind they could afford) on Billy's desk, luring his attention away from his essay in all the ways he knew would work.

"You're overworking yourself," Steve said, hoisting himself up onto the windowsill. The window was wide open and the fall from the fifth floor was menacingly long, though Steve seemed to like the

possibility of slipping into the hands of fate with nothing more than a wrong twist of muscles. How else would he find out if he could fly if not by falling first, was Steve's excuse every time Billy ached to pull him away from the edge. Billy could not understand Steve's fixation with tempting death. Maybe it was the poetic part of him that found beauty in pretty things dying. And boy, was Steve pretty.

Billy had never really delved too deep into the mystery of to whom he was attracted. He liked girls. Well, he didn't like girls. He liked women. But he enjoyed toying with them more than any kind of romance these affairs could ever conjure up. He would play as long as they let him and then find another one once the last grew tired of him. He didn't mind that. He had never considered himself much of a dating type. Call it commitment issues all you want. A sense of self-preservation sat better with him in the matter of usage of correct terms. Of course, then there was his strange leaning towards pretty boys with pretty ideas and pretty mouths to speak them. And Steve, well, Steve was Steve. And that was the problem, Billy supposed. He had always kept his distance from the likes of him because he knew damn well what would happen if he didn't. Now it was too late to go back.

Steve was wondering if he could fly. But Billy had already fallen and he had learned the hard way that the answer was no. Thousand times over. No, no, no. The impact was crushing. The awakening was disheartening. And the worst thing? He didn't mind the pain.

Billy sighed. "It's due Friday." Not that it would take all that much persuading to get him to give into a movie night.

"I'm going out tonight so you'll have all the peace to write your little heart away then," Steve smiled. "Now get your ass up and come help me pick something to wear."

Billy couldn't help the tightening in his throat or the jealousy coiling in his stomach. "Where you going?" he asked as lightly as his miserable acting skills allowed.

"With Nancy. Who else?" the nonchalance in Steve's voice made Billy's heart squeeze. Nancy. Of course it was Nancy. If only he knew how much Billy longed to be her.

"Right," Billy said. He bit through the bitter ever-present disappointment, closed his laptop, and got up to help his friend out. His friend. Nothing more than that. He didn't mind.

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Billy knew that the image of Steve he had so carefully constructed was not true to the real thing. He was very much aware that he'd idolized Steve, that he'd moulded him into this perfect divine being. But Steve was human, so very human. He had shortcomings, flaws. Billy noticed. But what were a couple of cigarette burns on otherwise pristine fabric? What were a couple of scars on otherwise untouched skin? Nothing. They were nothing to Billy.

Billy did not, could not understand Steve. That didn't stop him from trying.

"Steve," Billy said, leaning his head back against the bathroom door, "talk to me."

"I'm sorry." The words were spoken so softly Billy was barely able to hear them through the sound of running water.

"It's okay. You are okay."

"Yeah, yeah," Steve whispered, "I'm okay." Neither of them believed the blatant lie.

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"Are you dating Nancy?" Billy asked. Letting the question out after having it reside on the tip of his tongue for nothing short of an eternity felt like letting a boulder slide off of his shoulders.

It hung in the air for a second. It seemed to freeze the room. Steve's hand stilled halfway to his mouth, the last slice of pizza he had been willing to sell his soul for just seconds ago forgotten.

"It looks liked it, doesn't it?" Steve sighed. "I guess I brought this one onto myself."

"You are the king of indirect answers, Harrington."

"Sorry. Uh, no we are not dating," Steve avoided Billy's eyes. Conspicuously. Very conspicuously. Billy stared at his profile, waiting for him to speak the volumes he had left unspoken. Steve sighed. "We used to date. In high school. She was... Well, she was Nancy. You know? Everyone adores Nancy. And I kind of convinced myself that I loved her. And I kept convincing myself for a long time. Spoiler alert – I didn't. At least not in that kind of way. So we had a talk, realised each of us wanted something different and broke up. Stayed friends, thought. Obviously, I mean. She's into this Byers kid. Jonathan Byers, you know him? Kinda strange but he's nice, I reckon. Good for her. I wasn't. Now, I'm like her gay best friend," Steve chuckled, shaking his head. And then his smile dropped.

"You are gay?" Billy's eyebrows met in a deep frown. Steve wasn't... Who was he kidding? Steve was exactly the gay type – with the hair obsession and all. It's just that Billy had always assumed... Well, he had always assumed Steve and Nancy were a thing. This was... This was good. This was great.

"Shit, that slipped out. Please, Billy, don't freak out on me. I really, really don't want to move out," Steve groaned, rubbing his face

"I'm not... I don't mind." Billy did not know why that, out of all things, was his response. This was an open doorway, an ornate gate, a fucking golden hallway for him to tell Steve. He didn't.

"Really? Fuck, Billy, thank god. I was proper scared for a second there. You seem like the type. No offense. I just- Fuck. It's not like I want to jump every guy I see, you know? I hate that bullshit. Like, how straight guys just assume I want to suck them off just because I don't have the, uh, same preferences as them. Fuck, I'm glad you are fine with this."

"Yeah," Billy forced a small smile, "yeah, of course. Don't worry about it."

"This really isn't how I was planning to come out to my best friend."

Billy smiled, bumped Steve's shoulder with his own. Best friend. Yeah, he was Steve's best friend. He tried to tell himself that was enough. Because it was. Of course it was.

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Steve swung his feet back and forth a little. A cigarette in one hand, a half-empty can of lukewarm beer in the other. He rested his elbows on his knees, his eyes were trained on the street below. Billy didn't make a noise. One wrong move. It would take no more than one wrong move. Steve could do a lot, but Billy was quite sure that flying wasn't on the list.

He walked up behind him, wrapped his arms around his torso, held onto him. Steve didn't startle. Instead, he leaned back into Billy, let his head rest against his shoulder.

"Come in," Billy whispered.

"Why?"

"I don't need a funeral to attend. My schedule's tight as it is."

Steve chuckled. "I like the view."

"It's not worth it."

"Yes, it is."

"Please, come in."

Steve did. Billy was grateful. He decided to have a lock installed on the window.

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Billy woke up to a persistent hand shaking him into consciousness.

"Hey," he mumbled. He blinked once, twice, three times until Steve's face came into focus. His hair wasn't done. Billy fought the urge to reach out and rake his fingers through it, mess it up even more. What time was it?

"I can't sleep. Wanna go for a ride with me?"

"Steve," Billy groaned. But he did get up – he had never excelled at

saying no to Steve. He put on a pair of jeans, pulled on a jacket, and they were off.

Steve drove. Billy stared out of the window. The wind was wild. It made him want to shout all of his secrets into the void, let them vanish into the darkness, take the pressure off his chest along with them.

The car came to an abrupt halt. Steve got out. Billy followed.

It was quite warm for early spring but the temperature certainly wasn't high enough to have a dip, most definitely not in the middle of the night, in a lake that truly didn't seem all that inviting. Steve took off his shirt, his pants following shortly after. Billy was hesitant to even take off his jacket.

"C'mon," Steve smiled, "it'll be fun." Strands of dark brown fell into his eyes. Billy's fingers itched, his will crumbled.

"I'm not sure I like the spontaneous you. You are going to be the death of me one day." The cold bit its fangs into Billy's skin the moment it was free of his shirt. Goosebumps spread like wildfire.

Steve smirked over his shoulder, submerged to the waist in the ice-cold lake, "Am I? I hoped I'd be the death of myself first."

"Why do you do that to yourself?" Billy asked. He let the lake envelop him. He relished in the sting of cold seeping into the very marrow of his bones. When he emerged again, Steve was in front of him, close enough to touch.

"I don't know."

"I don't believe you."

"I prefer physical pain."

"To what?"

"Emotions."

Billy reached out, catching Steve's wrists with his cold, cold hands.

He ran his fingertips over his forearms. "You shouldn't. You don't deserve to feel pain at all."

Steve laughed, there wasn't much humour to the sound. "Doesn't everyone?"

"No," Billy closed his eyes, "not you." He let go, let his body float away.

He had always wondered how someone like Steve could be so incredibly sad under the seamless surface, how he could resort to such things. It was hard to wrap his head around Steve not being absolutely perfect. But Steve truly wasn't. Steve was broken in so many ways Billy wasn't sure he was mendable anymore. He wasn't sure if Steve even wanted to be mended. Billy had never been blind enough not to see the fractures in Steve's smile, the bags under his eyes, the cracks in his façade. Billy loved him all the same.

"I don't like many people, Billy. Not really," Steve said. His voice was distorted by the water filling Billy's ears. "But I like you."

"I like you, too." Of course he did. Saying it was like saying the sun would rise in the morning, like saying summer would come after spring, like saying his heart was beating.

"I know."

Billy once again found himself inches away. Drops of water were lingering on Steve's lashes. The moonlight reflected off of them. Steve was beautiful. No matter what, Steve would always be beautiful to Billy.

"Kiss me," Steve whispered.

He did.